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"RECOLLECTIONS"
OF THE
McKissick Rangers.

BY A MEMBER.

NO. 4.

When we get to Virginia I shall ask the indulgence of your readers to pay my respects to the "Conscript law." There we began to see and feel its practical working. On the coast we had a great deal of fun out of it. Frank Milwood and his cousin Shelt Fowler furnished fun for the command. Jim McCullouch took no small part in it, too. These and many other matters connected with it, I will try and bring in at the proper time and place. I promised the readers, though, that I would take them back on Bear's Island.

This is not an Island, in its proper sense. It is a peninsula, lying between Pon Pon and Ashepoo rivers, the waters of which are connected by a canal. This canal had been used by the planters to transport their products to market. Roads were, in many places, thrown up and constituted embankments to protect the rice farms. In some places a horse walking on it would shake the ground for several feet around. As a strategetic point it had no military significance whatever. The roads from Jacksonborough to the point at the head of St. Helena sound was, for about four miles, under cover of our guns at Willtown battery, on the opposite side of Pon Pon river. This river below Willtown was obstructed so as to render the passage of vessels impossible. With these advantages in our favor the Confederate authorities discontinued the picket guard on Bear's Island, and in April, 62, they were drawn in.

Previously our headquarters were on the opposite side of the river, a little below Willtown. About half way between picket headquarters and the point was the "Matthew's place," at which we had kept a picket guard since our first occupation of the Island. This was our first picket headquarters. Between the Matthews place and Mosquito creek we had torn up all the bridges. The same was done on the road leading to the point of Bear's Island. Thus our position was comparatively secure from any advance the enemy might attempt to make. The section of country around the Matthews place might be compared to the desert of Sahara, only it was mud and water instead of sand. O nan oasis stood the Matthews house and outbuildings. On all sides as far as the eye could reach was a vast plain. The Matthews house was a long building with a piazza on one side and across one end. A dense thicket of shrubbery surrounded the house on three sides. In front of the house, and in the direction of the enemy, stood our pickets. The post was about 200 yards from the house at a bridge that crossed the canal, on the opposite side of which the roads forked—one leading toward the point and the other towards mosquito creek. The house was high enough from the ground for a horse to stand under it. At the time we are going to speak of, the bridge across the canal had been torn up, and our picket guards were standing in the piazza. One night, about the first of March, '62, while on guard with Jim McCulloch, Frank Millwood and John Faucett, at this place, we were thrown into considerable excitement. John Faucett and Frank Millwood were standing in the piazza at the end of the house. Jim McCullouch and myself were in the other end of the house asleep. It was just before daybreak. The crescent moon was rising above the eastern horizon, and gave a dim light through the foliage. A pistol fired, and in an instant another shot rang out in the air. I was aroused. I heard Frank say "men to your post." John raised the yell and came running to the door hallooing "fall in Company D, fall in." "Lt. Foss deploy your skirmishers and give 'em h—ll." I had had been with John before, and knew his tactics when he wanted to play the "bluff." I had this advantage of Jim, but you need not think that either of us went into ecstacies over our apparent surroundings. I had gathered my coat for my pants and stove my foot into the sleeve up to my knee. We had no time to make a light. My pistols were out in the piazza without caps on them. I gathered my sabine and gun, threw open the door, and prepared to shoot and cut my way out. All this was the work of a few moments. We found the assaulting party was in the rear of the house, and between us and our relief. How far John had succeeded in bluffing we had no means of knowing. But, whatever was done, must be done soon. It would never do for daylight to come and reveal our true situation. Our pistols were recapped, and we felt secure against reasonable odds. Our horses were saddled. The only way of escape was by the road our enemies were holding. A caucus was held, and the situation discussed, hurriedly. The conclusion was, we must "get up and get." Next was, "who will go forward." Like the invited guests all made excuses. At last "Stonewall Jackson" was turned into the road at the gallop. So were the others. Each rider with pistol in hand. We had to ride by file. For some of us this was perhaps to be the last ride. As we drew near the dark avenue, walled on each side with dense thickets, "Stonewall" raised his head and through dilated nostrils announced the presence of our enemy. Spurs pressed him forward, and soon we had run the gauntlet and were shooting like so many arrows up the side of the canal. "Prince" dashed past like a parrott shell. My horse stumbled and fell and I lost my cap. Before my horse recovered they were all past me and I got down to hunt my cap. One fellow says "come on, they can kill us yet." I could not find the cap, so I mounted and rode on bareheaded with the others towards our relief. John Faucett reported to picket headquarters. The rest of us stopped. I tied my handkerchief around my head. Soon Lieut. Mabry Thomas led the whole reserve at the place. Lockart Mitchell rode up to me and said "hello Sallie Worthy, are you here." We went back to our post. The Lieut. and relief went with us. It was now daylight. We found old shoes, hats, bonnets, shawls, walking sticks, &c., strewn along the road which revealed the character of our foe, who had taken to the marsh when they heard us coming behind them. We found out from an old darkey living near our picket post that a large body of the slaves from the up county, as it were, had that night attempted to get to the yankees, but coming upon our pickets they were stopped. Some of them, however, got past and were taken on Edisto island that evening. Some we found, and others returned to their homes. I found my cap in the edge of the water, in the canal, just ready to be taken off by the rising tide.

On another occasion before this, I was on picket at the same place. Bill Savage and Gilliam Thomas were on post with me. We were standing at the bridge which I have told you was about 200 yards from the Mathews house. Tom Fowler, (long hungry) with the rest of the relief was in the house asleep. It was as dark a night as I ever saw, I think. In rear of the house, in a little hut, lived an old negro who had a little dog. Soon after we went on past the dog began to bark, and kept it up for at least one hour. Our horses were restless. The ducks and frogs kept such a quacking and croaking, which, together with the barking of the dog made the night hideous. The bridge across the canal had not been torn up. The night was so dark we could not see ten steps from us. We brought a horse on post. Bill Savage watched the horse and Gilliam and I watched the road in front. From the action of the horse we found that the trouble was in the direction of the house. I told Bill and Gilliam to mind the post, and I would go back and see what was the matter, or put the reserve on their guard. When I passed around the house I found a drove of "marsh ponies" picking about among the rose bushes. A little Jack began to bray, and this aroused the men in the house. As I returned to my post, passing the end of the piazza, I saw Tom Fowler standing with his coat, shoes and hat all off. I spoke to him. He was like Zachariah—speechless. I spoke again and he knew me. He said "who was that blowing that horn." I told him "it was that cavalry in the rear of the house sounding a charge."

Bear's Island could beat the world for ducks, bees, "goobers" and sweet potatoes. It was without doubt the richest land I ever saw. Many kinds of game could be found on it. Deer was plentiful. I don't expect there was another section in the whole rice county of the same size that raised an equal quantity of that article. The first night I ever stayed on Bear's Island, Jack Ison and myself were put on guard at a place where 600 bushels of rice had been burned in one pile. We hitched our horses at the base of a straw pile to protect them from the cold wind. The fog on the river was so heavy we could see but a short distance, not half way across the stream. We climbed to the top of the straw stack, dug out holes, wrapped our blankets around us and buried ourselves in the straw up to our necks. Jack had his face turned one way and mine was the other. The wind blew a gale all night. In the river the water lashed itself into a foam. A cold rain set in soon after we had got ensconced in our comparatively comfortable positions, which at times turned to sleet. In this position we spent a long, cold January night. Next morning when we left, I could scarcely ride, I was so benumbed, and Jack was in the same fix. This night I contracted the "pleuritic affection," of which I have heretofore spoken. It was not customary for one relief to stand all night, but we had agreed to do so, in order to get relieved next day and night. It was no fault of Lieut. Thomas', but *our own voluntary acts*. After we returned to our headquarters next morning, we found our men had procured a lot of honey. The bees were flying about in the cold rain as though it was June. Charley Fowler had captured the gums and honey. We had nothing to eat with it but "hard tack," and it was a poor go.

As I have already intimated our men found out that they could dispense with picket duty on this Island, and we were withdrawn. We made one raid even then a short time before we went to Virginia, of which I will tell your readers after a while.

Col. Stevens liked for his soldiers to attend church. He was truly a good man. Of course we could get permission from our company officers to go to church, or anywhere else we wanted; but when we had to pass through several lines of troops it was necessary to get permission from Regimental headquarters at least, or go in company with some commissioned officers; so several of us, including Joe Leech, got permission to go to Willtown to hear an Episcopal minister preach. Col. Stevens, I think, belonged to that denomination. The church building showed the wealth and refinement of the congregation that had been accustomed to worship there. With all the politeness for which that denomination are proverbial, we were invited to seats. We felt ourselves at home. As the minister stepped into the pulpit the organ announced "Sweet Hour of Prayer." The music was superb. The organist was mistress of her situation. She was certainly an embodiment of all the refinement, grace and beauty of which South Carolina boasted in better days. The minister was none the less so. His text was, Eccl. XI chapter and 9th verse—"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes, but know, then, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Before the minister had got half way through reading his text, the case of the young soldier under Cromwell presented itself to my mind which I shall relate:

It was a special order of that officer that every soldier under his command should always have a Bible in his pocket. Agreeably to this requisition a licentious young soldier carried a copy of the Scriptures which, during an action, was penetrated by a ball from the enemy. After the army had retired from the field this profligate youth had the curiosity to examine how far the ball had penetrated his Bible, and while he was turning over one leaf after another the passage which our Minister had chosen as his text arrested the young soldier's attention. It proved the happy instrument of enlightening his understanding, of alarming his conscience, of changing his heart, and finally saved his soul. That this same passage, under similar circumstances, should present itself to me, was a coincident impressed upon my mind that will last as long as life. In this connection I will further say it is to be lamented that men of the sword are more frequently distinguished for their profligacy than their piety; they are more in the habit of imprecating curses on themselves and others than importuning for blessings. The nature of the soldier's occupation tends to inspire him with a degree of hardihood; with a defiance of danger that often degenerates into a forgetfulness, and even defiance of his God. His unsettled situation in life, his want of the regular ordinances of grace, his exposure to ensnaring company and various other considerations have a natural tendency to divert his attention from things divine and eternal.

I am satisfied I did not hear such a sermon preached during my stay in the army as I heard that day. I think it was the last sermon preached in that house during our stay in that section. It was expected every day that a battle would take place there. The few citizens remaining up to that time moved off, and the doors of the church were closed.

While waiting that day for the congregation to assemble, and service to begin, we took a stroll down by the battery. Here we found Pete Moseley, who had killed Jim Leech, (Joe's brother,) and who, by some law or finding of the jury, or some other means, was to serve a term in the army. I never saw him after that.

UNUS.

A Talk With Dr. Vedder.—The Rev. Dr. Vedder and wife have returned to the city and are staying at the Mansion House on Broad street. Dr. Vedder, in conversation with a Reporter for the *News and Courier*, said that he was in Schenectady, N. Y., on the fateful Tuesday. He had no intimation of the earthquake until the following morning, when the morning papers gave a whole page to the terrible event, with the appalling declaration that no single word could be received from Charleston.

'The New York *Sun* contained the suggestion of a tidal wave,' said Dr. Vedder, 'which had swept the dear old city and its inhabitants out of existence. Fearful as must have been the reality of what was suffered here, second only to it was the uncertainty and suspense endured by me and mine for more than twenty-four hours, until telegraphic communication was reopened. Then it was impossible to get private intelligence. Dispatches remained unanswered, and seemingly unnoticed. There was a reason for this, well known now, but then inexplicable. The torture of all those hours need not be dwelt upon. When the first tidings of the awful catastrophe came, the whole heart of the people of the North seemed to throb with a single impulse of sympathy for Charleston. I have never seen—scarcely ever conceived—so spontaneous, universal and abounding an emotion thrilling every class of people. Everything was forgotten but the historic and beautiful city and its woes. Having an appointment to preach in the church of my childhood, I was requested to speak upon the all-engrossing event, and did so in the few broken words at my command, and I am sure no speaker ever addressed an audience more in sympathy with his theme, and more considerate of his inability to give voice to his feelings. Assurance of help were given to every degree and in every form needed, and this same spirit was manifested everywhere and in all ways. All these things are known here, and I only mention them because you ask. It is an alleviation, even of so fearful a calamity as that which has befallen Charleston, that the tenderest thoughts of the whole land have been lovingly drawn out towards her, and the hand of help ungrudgingly and gladly extended. If any heart here desponds for the dear city, it may find courage in the interest of all the country in its welfare. Let it be high treason to the glorious traditions of Charleston for any one to despair of her future.'

Marrying Dringing Men.—Marrying men to reform them has never been a successful enterprise on the part of women. Girls are worth too much unmarried to sacrifice themselves to beat sense into the head of any man on God's footstool. Such a man does not wean so easily as a calf. He will go home only to sober up, and then not till the other places are closed. A girl will marry such a man, hoping that on the next year he will be better; but the next year he will be worse. There are sober boys enough for all the girls; and there is no need marrying a drunkard.—*New York Sun.*

FARM WORK FOR SEPTEMBER.

We have discussed, in former numbers, preparation for all crops. The time has come for planting them. September is the natural and best seeding time for grasses, clover, lucerne, oats rye and barley. We say natural seeding time, because the seeds of the various plants enumerated are matured in the summer when it is hot and dry, and even if the heads are shattered and the seed scattered on the ground, the latter do not find proper conditions for germinating till the later rains set in and cool nights and heavy dews prevail. The earlier in the month [illegible] conditions are present the better it is, because ample time is furnished the young plants to establish themselves well and firmly in the soil before the freezes of winter. In a wild or uncultivated state these plants begin their growth at time indicated; this is nature's appointment, therefore, and is best suited to the wants of the plants. In northern latitudes, where hardest freezes prevail, snow protects the young plants during winter; in the South longer and stronger Autumn growth must take the place of the snow covering.

As winter grasses abound more in northern than in southern latitudes, the conclusion seemed natural that the heat of Southern climates was prejudicial to these plants; and one step further in the same direction seemed reasonable, to wit, that they needed shade in the South. Hence the practice of seeding grass and clover with small grains to get the benefit of their shade. Doubtless some shade is desirable during periods of intense heat and drought, but can it be procured in the manner spoken of, without incurring other injury greater than the good received when grass is sown with grain? Our observation is that more is lost than gained. In the first place the projecting shade is taken away just when most needed; grain is harvested in June and July when the greatest heat and severest droughts prevail. Plants accustomed to partial shade are then suddenly exposed to intensest heat. But this is not all. In the case of grasses proper, the grain crops make demand upon the soil for exactly the same food the grasses need. Being larger and more vigorous at the start, the former over-master the grass at the beginning and get the lion's share of the food. At harvest, therefore, the grass is suddenly exposed to the fiercest rays of the sun when it is comparatively starved and weak from the unequal struggle. On exceedingly rich soils where there is ample food for both, this objection does not hold so strongly, but such soils are not generally found. This difficulty may in part be obviated by top-dressing in the Spring. But where land is so abundant, amply enough for every crop a farmer could wish to cultivate, as a rule, it is better to sow the grasses by themselves and not in conjunction with grain crops. This gives them an opportunity of getting strong during the early stages of growth, when they are naturally weak, and puts them on vantage ground when the struggle with heat and drought begins. These remarks apply with greater force to the annual winter grasses and clovers which complete their growth in early spring. These of necessity must be sown by themselves or with some crop which follows after them, but does not grow simultaneously with them.

We cannot urge too frequently upon beginners the importance of heavy seeding, be sure to sow enough for the plants to occupy all of the land—leave no place for intruders. Sow enough to allow for defective seed—for adulterated seed, and for the dying out of weak plants. After one has taken all the trouble of thorough preparation and heavy manuring—such as grass requires—it is folly to fail from insufficient seeding.

Very light covering of the seed is of the first importance; deep covering will certainly bring failure. But when lightly covered, seeds will not germinate well if the weather is dry, unless they are firmly pressed into the soil. Hence the importance of the roller. It is almost indispensable in grass culture; it smooths and levels the ground for the mower, presses small rocks below the surface, hastens the germination of seeds, and imparts vigor to the young plants. Heavy, impacting rains may do some of the work of the roller, but in their absence the surface soil is too loose and too easily dried off for the little plant to establish itself in it. Remember, that at first its roots start at or very near the surface. It is not in the situation of a plant springing from a seed burried two or three inches below the surface.

The oat crop has been so often winter-killed of late that many are discouraged and disposed to abandon the practice of fall-sowing. We confess that recent experience has been very discouraging. But in view of the great value of the crop, when it does succeed we are loth to abandon it. We have faith in the possibility of developing, by proper selection and cultivation, a winter oat capable of resisting extreme cold. What is known in Middle Georgia as "winter grazing oat" does certainly resist cold better than other varieties. In this locality, the past winter, the mercury descended to zero and the cold was long continued, and yet a good deal of this oat survived, and by its abundant tillering made from one-fourth to one-third of a crop. In most fields of rust-proof oats sown in autumn scattering stools could also be found, and that too in positions not specially sheltered. Now if, without selection and from indiscriminate sowings of seed, individual plants spring up with power to withstand intense cold, why, with proper care, could not a hardy variety be propagated and established from these cold-resisting plants? We have faith that it can be done, and our faith is based on facts like these, related by Darwin in his work on Animals and Plants under domestication: "Wheat quickly assumes new habits of life. The summer and winter kinds were classed by Linnaeus as distinct species; but M. Monnier has proved that the difference between them is only temporary. He sowed winter wheat in spring, and out of one hundred plants four alone produced ripe seed; these were sown and resown, and in three years plants were reared which ripened all their seed. Conversely, nearly all the plants raised from summer wheat, which was sown in autumn, perished from frost; but a few were saved and produced seed, and in three years this summer variety was converted into a winter variety." Our habit has been to sow indiscriminately, as chance or convenience might decide, spring grown oats in the fall and fall grown oats in the spring. Is it any wonder that we have no fixed varieties adapted to either season? Some time ago we urged the careful saving of all rust-proof oats that survived the past winter. We hope it has been done and that they will be sown this month, and the same thing repeated for at least three years.

The present crop covers all of our experience with the winter grazing oat. It was not ready to cut until the 10th of July, though sown on the 30th of October last. Possibly its having been thinned out by the cold, and the tillering consequent thereon, may have retarded its ripening. But although June was a very wet month and bunches of rye distributed through these oats were badly rusted, the oats had no rust whatever. We shall sow it again and watch results.

Neither barley nor rye were killed by the extreme cold of the past winter. To some extent, therefore, these can be made to take the place of fall oats—barley on the richer and rye on the poorer lands. With these cover the bare cotton fields during the winter and save them from washing and leaching. Simply harrow in the seed—don't break up the land and increase the facilities for for washing. When green, these crops can be cut and fed to horses and cows; when matured, they can be harvested, threshed and ground and make most excellent stock feed. Rye straw commands ready sale for filling in horse collars and other purposes, but the stalls and stock yards may well dispose of it all. Our soils cry aloud for humus—let us take every opportunity to supply it. Some one has suggested that oats and rye might be sown together—if the oats should be killed the rye would not and the land would still be occupied with a desirable crop. We see no objection except the unequal ripening of the two crops, but as rye will remain standing without waste for some time after it ripens it could wait on the oats. Upon the whole the suggestion strikes us as a good one, worthy of being tested by trial.

A friend has recently called our attention to the successful culture, in this vicinity, of a grass variously called "Schraders grass," "Australian oats," Rescue grass, etc., Bromus unioloides or Schraderi being its technical name. He spoke very highly of it as a winter grazing grass, growing very rapidly in early spring and producing a large quantity of broad, nutritious leaves. Though sometimes called "rescue" and resembling grass generally known by that name, it is said to be much larger and more luxuriant in its growth and decidedly more valuable. Our seedsmen here inform us that there is considerable demand for the seed in Louisiana and Texas, where it is highly esteemed. It is said by some authorities to be perennial; by others to be an annual. We learn that it was partially killed here by the extraordinary cold of last winter, but usual cold does not hurt it. It would probably thrive below the thirty-fourth degree of latitude.

This is the proper month in which to sow burr clover and crimson clover. Both of these are annuals; beginning growth in autumn they mature and die by the 1st of the following June. They are valuable plants, especially in localities where ordinary red clover will not thrive. Our friends below the head of navigation in our rivers could have as fine clover pastures in the spring, from these two plants, as could be seen anywhere. Make the ground rich, sow a plenty of seed in September and cover them lightly; that is the whole secret.

Towards the last of the month pea-vines and crab-grass will be ready for mowing and curing. Farmers seem to be pretty generally of the opinion that pea vines should not be cut until young peas form on them; that the peas are less apt to drop off then and the vines more easily cured than at an early stage. If left too late the stems become woody and hard, and are worthless as forage. Both extremeties then are to be avoided. It is a difficult forage to cure and opinions vary as to the best method of doing it. If one has abundant house-room, or the means of providing cheap, temporary shelters, it is unquestionably best to put the vine under cover as soon as they are fairly wilted, hanging them on poles, or arranging in some way so as to allow a free circulation of air. A loft with a slatted or open floor is an excellent place to cure this or any kind of forage. In the absence of the above appliances the vines may be put in small cocks—narrow but high—and if the weather is dry several of these may be thrown together into a larger cock on the third or fourth day. Constant regard should be had to avoid exposing much surface to sun or dew. Hence high and narrow cocks are recommended. It is difficult to have them properly made by ordinary hands; this is one of the things a farmer should personally supervise.

Crabgrass makes very good hay if cut at the proper time, which is just as the seeds are forming and before they are ripe. The seeds drop off readily when mature, and whatever of the substance of the plant passes into seeds is thus lost. Cut and cure, therefore, before the seed will drop off and before the stalks become woody. They are too small to be stiff, but when old they become woody, nevertheless, and lose their digestibility, just as over-ripe straw does.—*W. L. Jones, in Southern Cultivator.*

Destitution in Texas.—Washington, Sept. 13.—First Auditor Chenoweth has just returned from a month's visit to Texas. He gives a sad picture of the destitution and suffering there on account of the drought. He is astonished that there has been so little said on this subject. He says it is estimated that in Jack County not twenty bushels of corn and wheat have come up. The drought extends from beyond Fort Worth up into the Pan Handle. This is a fine grazing country and a large amount of stock is kept there. This year, however, it has been impossible to supply the stock with water. People have been obliged to haul water for household purposes for twenty and thirty miles. There are few running streams and a few artesian wells. A great deal of stock has famished. In large tracts of country the people have almost nothing to eat. They made no gardens and have no potatoes or other vegetables. While Judge Chenoweth was in Texas he presided over several relief meetings where people were collecting seed corn, wheat and money to send to the sufferers. He says the farmers in the regions affected by the drought are generally of small means, and depend upon their products from year to year for subsistence. They thus find themselves immediately in want when their crops fail.

Two Girls Weary of Life.—Dundee, Mich., September 13.—Two young and pretty girls, named Yetta Vogelsang, of this place, and Ada Laflington, of Monroe, attempted suicide to-day by taking chloroform. They were together on the streets in the forenoon, apparently happy, but near noon they secured a vial of chloroform and repaired to the outskirts of the village, where they seated themselves by the roadside and prepared to die. They wrote letters saying that it was their last day upon earth; that no one cared for them; that the people of Dundee had traduced them until they wanted to die. They were discovered in time to save their lives, though at first it was thought that Miss Laflington was dead.

Not Her First Appearance.—Lawyer (to a timid young woman)—Have you ever appeared as witness in a suit before?

Young woman (blushing)—Y-yes, sir, of course.

Lawyer—Please state to the jury just what suit it was.

Young woman (with more confidence)—It was a nun's veiling, shirred down the front and trimmed with a lovely blue, with hat to match—

Judge (rapping violently)—Order in the court!